

A
LETTER
OF RESPECTFUL FREEDOM
TO THE
HOUSE OF LORDS;
WITH A
PARTICULAR ADDRESS
TO THE *John Butler*
LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.



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THE HISTORY OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

FROM THE REFORMATION

TO THE PRESENT

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND



A L E T T E R, &c.

MY LORDS,

THIS is written by one far removed from public life, who wishes to see his Countrymen as well satisfied as he himself is, with the wisdom, or upright designs, of the councils and determinations of the legislative power. And surely, my Lords, it must appear, upon due reflection, as weak as it is illiberal, even to suppose that in any national concern, the rulers of a country like this can possibly recommend any step, but what they believe and

hope will be attended with national good. And yet we too well know, my Lords, what unfavourable, and what unwarrantable Suggestions of this kind are cultivated and spread abroad by the inferior classes of people, either from a want of education, from a want of proper information, or from a culpable propensity to speak evil of dignities.

But what shall we say, my Lords, when this happens amongst the rulers themselves? When they so publicly and so offensively call in question the political fidelity of one another? However easily this matter may be settled by themselves out of the house; yet be assured, my Lords, that it is a great stumbling block in the Way even of the quiet and obedient, but a sad encouragement to a suspicious and murmuring multitude.

Opposition to plans proposed in Parliament (whether formed in the cabinet or otherwise) must, in many cases, be laudable, and even necessary: for however well intended, and however promising, they may seem to those who marked the out-lines of them; yet when
publicly

publicly and minutely examined, they may be found altogether unfit for legal, or political adoption. But to oppose measures, my Lords, is one thing; and to reflect upon persons, their employments, or their professions, is certainly another thing; and as one of your Lordships but lately very justly remarked—"more proper for the Morning Post, than for a Parliamentary Debate." I am sorry to have occasion to add, my Lords, that the Morning Post has been able to deliver to the public (as the genuine language of Peers) too much of this personal abuse, so foreign to the business of a Senate, and so unsuitable to the Dignity of their Lordships Birth and Stations. There is a liberal, a graceful manner of debating, that is very powerful and very pleasing; which you, my Lords, above all people, are expected to be masters of, and which, above all people, your Lordships so generally discover in your private, or social characters.

You sit, my Lords, as the more immediate Guardians of your Country, and sometimes as decisive Judges upon your honour only: amongst men therefore thus distinguished, and thus confided in, the possible inter-

interference of private interest or public disaffection, should not be so much as named, or suggested.

The lower House indeed, my Lords, have ever been thought too personal in their debates ; which, if true, must necessarily lessen it's general consequence, and tarnish the abilities of some of it's most able speakers : Nay, it has been said, I believe, that merely upon this account, many Gentlemen, well qualified, in every respect, to sit there, have absolutely refused to become members of it.

But to hear debates in the upper Assembly, my Lords, was always accounted a most refined, as well as a most instructive entertainment. What a pity, what a misfortune, even to suppose the contrary now ! Not because of the disappointed auditors—not because of the noble speakers themselves—but because of the impediments which it must unavoidably afford, to wise councils, and just and happy legislation in general. Any Peer, my Lords, may and ought to bear to hear his opinion found fault with ; but what honest man, especially

especially what noble Senator, my Lords, can hear his integrity publicly attacked, without feeling a sensibility, very likely (in the heat of a debate) to produce error in himself, and to beget an additional share of it in his unguarded opponent?

It must be ever right in you, my Lords, carefully to watch over every part of the Constitution, lest any step should be taken, however undesignedly, which may prove destructive of it: but it seems necessary also to persuade yourselves, my Lords, that nothing can come before your Lordships with a treacherous intention. Acquit the heart, my Lords, if you condemn the judgment: the heart once honourably acquitted, bids fair to render a mistaken judgment self-convicted; but the heart dishonourably arraigned, too naturally causes a perseverance in error. This parliamentary error in judgment, however, is sometimes clearly proved, my Lords, against the violent and personal complainant himself: in which case, how aggravating, how mortifying, the reflection to a great mind, to be brought in so irreputable a debtor to men as well as their opinions! Besides, my Lords, the jealousies of
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British Statesmen seem to be even more restless than those of the Lover: a single, and a very supportable evil, immediately begets a thousand imaginary and hopeless ones; insomuch that a cloudy day only is sufficient to throw them into a deep despair, and to make them assure their Countrymen, that poor Old England must inevitably be invaded. Pardon, my Lords, this humble attempt to be facetious with your Lordships upon so serious a subject, and at so critical a conjuncture of time.

I have all along, my Lords, been painfully alluding to our Troubles abroad, and look up to your Lordships (under Divine Providence) as the chief Fountain of Relief. To suppose, my Lords, that so arduous an undertaking could be carried on without incurring some error, would be to think too highly of human nature: but if it should be urged by a certain able part of the Noble Senate, that had their counsels been regarded, these misfortunes would never have happened; I must beg leave to reply, that there appears to be equal reason to conclude, that these misfortunes would likewise never have happened, if such able Lords had
heartily

heartily joined Administration ; so powerfully has their Lordships unkind Opposition operated, on both sides of the Atlantic, in Favour of the American Cause ! But away with all retrospective ills : the question can never any longer be, my Lords, who caused these Troubles ? But who, or how we shall gloriously end them ?

I cannot sufficiently honour you, my Lord of Oxford, for your well grounded resolution in case of national extremity ; and doubt not, but that the Professions in general, and the younger part of our Universities in general, are ready likewise to shew all necessary and becoming bravery in so just a cause ; especially if any of those who are at the Head of the Professions, or who preside over the Universities, should find it expedient (a circumstance which, I hope, will never happen) to invite them forth by their own loyal example. But why should this spirit in your Lordship, or in any other Bishop, be deemed antichristian, or so much as antiepiscopal ? The occasion surely, viewed both in a religious and civil light, even more than justifies it. I shall not presume to speak of any example within your Lordship's own particular remembrance.

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brance. In the last century, however, my Lord, one of the most amiable men * that ever sat upon the bench, who was educated at Oxford, and whose worthy descendant † so lately, and with so great integrity, represented the University in Parliament; this brave Prelate, my Lord, fought and was twice wounded, in the service of his Royal Master: nevertheless, the character which is given of him, is this,—that he was much of a gentleman, much of a scholar, and *most* of a *Christian*. At that time, indeed, my Lord, the Royal Pretensions, we will suppose, might (in some respects) be a doubtful point; but *now*, my Lord, the Royal Privileges (ancient as the Colonies themselves) are most unwarrantably withholden—Allegiance itself is most unfaithfully broken—and the guilty parties are most dishonourably protected by a foreign Court.

As hereditary counsellors of the Crown therefore, my Lords in general, *are* you not *all* bound to do your

* Sir John Dolbin, Archbishop of York.

† The present Sir William Dolbin.

utmost (in the Cabinet and in the Senate) to recover its legal and accustomed rights? And as good subjects in common, though particularly interested in the event, *are* you not *all* bound, my Lords, to defend these Rights (if necessary) even with your blood? The straits of the time, and the extreme urgency of affairs, admit, my Lords, of no demur. As you love your King—as you love your Country—as you love yourselves, my Lords,—no longer halt ye between two opinions: Unite and conquer—unite, or fall.

You then, my Lords, unanimously lead the way; and the faithful Commons, together with the faithful People at large, will, I am persuaded, unanimously and bravely follow. *You—They—We all* mean well, my Lords; and have the same happy port of British Safety, and British Glory, in view: adverse winds alone have hitherto detained our bark, and detained it only: let but England unite in their endeavours, and all will still be well: perfidious France shall repent of her new, unjust Alliance—and the revolted Colonies shall still be ours.

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I have now, my Lords, only to intreat your Lordships to judge favourably of the design of this letter; and also to excuse the writer of it, for presuming to address it to your Lordships, without any other signature than that of,

My Lords,

A respectful, and faithful,

Humble Servant,

